

Aquatic Invasive Species Screening Protocol

For the Middle Fork of the Salmon River

The Middle Fork Ranger District requires that all boats be checked before they are put into the waters of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in an effort to prevent Aquatic Invasive Species from reaching our beloved river systems. This requirement is also being implemented to comply with the Biological Opinion (BO) regarding mitigations for spawning chinook salmon in the Middle Fork.

Middle Fork boaters are a very environmentally conscientious group, and while we recognize that this will impact the launch portion of your trip, we ask for your patience as we strive to comply with the BO and to protect this river we cherish.

All boats launching from Boundary Creek and Indian Creek when these sites are staffed must be screened before going into the eddy. **Boaters must establish contact with Forest Service Launch Site Personnel during normal business hours to obtain approval to put their boats in the water.** Once a launch site is staffed, boats cannot be put into the eddy until a Forest Service person checks them.

For boaters who start their trip a) when the launch site is not staffed, b) start on a tributary (like Marsh Creek), or c) if launching below Indian Creek: Boaters should be extra vigilant in ensuring that all boats are clean, drained and dry before launching. Use the information below for education and prevention.

This requirement will apply to everyone (private & commercial, IKs to sweep boats). Boaters are encouraged to arrange unloaded boats in an orderly fashion to allow ease of evaluation and increased efficiency at the launch site. Forest Service Launch Site Personnel will perform evaluations with Permit Holder and/or Trip Leader.

Launch Site Personnel will determine the relative risk by first going through the Low Risk criteria. If boat meets one or more of these criteria, they will likely authorize access to the eddy. Otherwise, they will review for High Risk criteria and perform an inspection before the craft is allowed to launch.

Low Risk (meets one or more of these criteria)	High Risk
Boat has not been out of Idaho in last 30 days	Boat is from out of state (or has been out of state within the last 30 days)
Boat is only used or last used on the Middle Fork (including take-out at Cache Bar)	Boat has been in multiple waters.
Boat appears to be Clean & Dry. (Road mud may be discounted if owner states that boat was clean and dry prior to driving in; same applies if raining.)	Boat appears to have mud, slime, plants, mussels and/or snails on it.
Owner of the boat is aware of the Clean, Drain & Dry requirement and states it has been followed (boat has been dry 5 or more days)	Boat appears to have standing water in it.*
	Owner is not aware of the Clean, Drain & Dry requirement.

*= Drift boats, kayaks and canoes more likely to have standing water.

Low risk boats: checkers may authorize to enter the river (no physical inspection required).

High risk boats need to be inspected before entering the river.

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Inspection:

Combination of a visual examination and hands on assessment, which is focused on seams and crevices where mud, plants and snails are most likely to be found.

- If the inspection finds the boat to be clean or free of mud, plant or animal debris and has no standing water: **checker can give permission for boat to enter the river.**
- If the inspection discovers mud, plant or animal debris and/or standing water, **checker will ask the owner to clean and/or drain the boat as far away from the river as practical.** The debris or water should not have a chance to enter the river or the wet zone adjacent to the river. Then checkers will **REINSPECT.**

If a boat fails inspection, or owner refuses to clean or drain a craft as requested, no launch permit will be issued.

The Biological Opinion is available on our website. Materials about preventing the spread of invasive species – aquatics and noxious weeds (terrestrials) – are also posted.

Questions may be emailed to: middlefork@fs.fed.us.